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The purpose of this study is to examine Joel Puckett's work, *Short Stories*, a new concerto for string quartet and wind ensemble. Composed for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Wind Ensemble and premiered at the 2013 National Convention of the College Band Directors National Association, this document provides insight and background information to future performers and conductors through research, analysis, and first-hand experience from the commission to the premiere.

The research method was designed to present original research and scholarship on *Short Stories*, addressing three main areas: the background of *Short Stories* and the compositional process, a formal analysis, and conclusions. The uniqueness of *Short Stories* lies in its construction and emphasis on pairs.

Puckett utilizes pairs in a powerful way in *Short Stories*. The pairing of a string quartet and wind ensemble, pairing each of the eight movements – four pairs, and the individual and intimate atmosphere created by the use of pairs, all speak to the overarching duality contained within the composition.

AN ANALYSIS OF JOEL PUCKETT'S SHORT STORIES:
A CONCERTO FOR STRING QUARTET
AND WIND ENSEMBLE

by

Timothy Lee Ellison

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Approved by

Committee Co-Chair

Committee Co-Chair

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To the glory of God,
in honor of my family, friends, mentors, teachers, and colleagues,
and in memory of Edward H. and Barbara A. Watkins

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Timothy Lee Ellison has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Co-Chair _____
John R. Locke

Committee Co-Chair _____
Kevin M. Gerald

Committee Members _____
Jennifer S. Walter

Welborn E. Young

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Joel Puckett is a modern composer whose compositional voice attracts listeners from many diverse backgrounds. He holds the belief that “music can bring consolation, hope, and joy to all who need it.”¹ His music reaches a wide range of audiences and is heralded in highly regarded publications, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Washington Post*. The *Washington Post* describes Puckett as “visionary” and “gifted.”² Puckett’s repertoire is wide in scope, ranging from solos, duets, and chamber music to works for large choral and instrumental ensembles. To date, Puckett has contributed eight works to the wind band repertoire: *Ping, Pang, Pong* (2004); *Blink* (2006); *It perched for Vespers nine* (2008); *Southern Comforts* (2008); *Shadow of Sirius* (2010); *Avelynn’s Lullaby* (2011); *Asmiiov’s Aviary* (2012); and *Short Stories* (2013).³

In spite of Puckett’s extensive compositional profile, few studies of his music have been completed. To date, only two doctoral projects have focused on the music of Puckett. In his 2009 document, Michigan State University’s Matthew O. Smith surveys Puckett’s first three works for winds, *Ping, Pang, Pong*, *It perched for Vespers nine*, and *Blink*. Smith’s document also includes a review of *This Mourning*, written by music critic Tim

¹ “Biography,” Joel Puckett, accessed May 20, 2014, <http://www.joelpuckett.com>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Smith and published in the *Baltimore Sun* in 2006.⁴ In his 2013 document David T. Vickerman of The Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University discusses the use of poetry in Puckett's *The Shadow of Sirius* and *It perched for Vespers nine*.⁵

There are three other publications that refer to Puckett's music. The first, published in the *Journal of Band Research* and written by Matthew O. Smith, focuses on Puckett's *It perched for Vespers nine*.⁶ The *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series includes two entries: one on Puckett's *It perched for Vespers nine* written by Kevin Gerald, ⁷ and the second on *Avelynn's Lullaby* written by Michael Golemo.⁸

The discussion and detailed analysis that follows will focus on Puckett's *Short Stories* because it is a distinctive contribution to contemporary wind band literature. The document will address three main areas: the background and compositional process, a formal analysis, and conclusions.

⁴ Matthew O. Smith, "A Conductor's Analysis of Three Wind Band Works of Joel Puckett" (DMA diss., Michigan State University, 2009).

⁵ David T. Vickerman, "'Uncovering a Common Emotional Core Through Poetry: The Connections Between Joel Puckett's *Shadow of Sirius* and *It perched for Vespers nine*" (DMA diss., Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 2013).

⁶ Matthew O. Smith, "A Conductor's Analysis of Joel Puckett's *It perched for Vespers nine*," *Journal of Band Research* 48, No. 1 (Fall 2012): 58-72.

⁷ Kevin Gerald, "It perched for Vespers nine," in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, vol. 7, ed. Richard Miles (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2009), 839-851.

⁸ Michael Golemo, "Avelynn's Lullaby," in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, vol. 9, ed. Richard Miles (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2013), 483-489.

CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF *SHORT STORIES*

General Information

Drs. John R. Locke and Kevin M. Gerald, conductors and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro led a consortium that commissioned *Short Stories*. Other members of the consortium included: the University of Michigan, Professor Michael L. Haithcock, conductor; the University of Texas, Professor Jerry F. Junkin, conductor; Northwestern University, Dr. Mallory B. Thompson, conductor; and the University of Colorado, Professor Allan McMurray, conductor.⁹

Commissioning, Inspiration, and Origin

In 2011, Puckett recalls receiving a telephone call in his Arlington, Texas hotel room. The call was from Kevin Gerald, stating that the University of North Carolina at Greensboro would be hosting the 2013 National Convention of the College Band Directors National Association. Gerald telephoned with the intent to commission a large-scale work for winds and chorus by Puckett. Puckett did not wish to write such a piece and asked for a few days to “pitch some different ideas.”¹⁰

After some dialogue regarding the possibilities, Puckett and Gerald agreed on a concerto grosso for the UNCG Wind Ensemble and string quartet as a feasible choice for

⁹ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, program note by Jacob Wallace (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), iv.

¹⁰ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

UNCG. At the time, UNCG's chamber ensemble, Casella Sinfonietta, had completed a recent performance and recording project of Puckett's *Southern Comforts* with violin professor, Marjorie Bagley. While Puckett was in residence for the recording of *Southern Comforts*, he pitched the idea of *Short Stories* to Bagley. Puckett recalls that Bagley was enthusiastic and excited for the opportunity. He then charged Bagley, John Locke, and Kevin Geraldini with the task of proposing the idea to the remaining members of the McIver String Quartet, who were in full support.¹¹

Development

After the commission was accepted, Puckett set some self-imposed guidelines. He remembers,

I wanted to accomplish something different and explore various compositional strategies and approaches that were not the same as before – not falling back on the same tricks. I needed short movements that were complete, in and of themselves, but that couldn't be extracted as stand alone movements – you have to hear each in context. I also wanted to make sure you could hear the quartet at all times and make it a collaborative process between the instruments.¹²

Beyond the aforementioned guidelines, Puckett was searching for material that was suggestive of telling a story.

Another part of his self-imposed guidelines, Puckett selected a very specific group of wind and percussion instruments, made clear in his instructions, "THIS IS AN EXACT INSTRUMENTATION;"¹³ the exact instrumentation indicating the unique

¹¹ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), iii.

independence of each part. The instrumentation requires thirty-eight players plus string quartet soloists. As seen below, Figure 1, Instrument Specifications, lists the orchestration.

Figure 1. Instrumentation Specifications.

Flute I-II-III
Oboe I-II
B-flat Clarinet I-II-III-IV
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon I-II-III
Alto Saxophone I (doubles Soprano)
Alto Saxophone II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
B-Flat Trumpet I-II-III-IV
Horn in F I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
Double Bass
Timpani
Percussion I – Vibraphone
Percussion II-III – Two Guitars (tuned as indicated in the score,
struck with mallets)
Percussion IV – Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Marimba
Harp
Piano/Celesta
String Quartet Soloists (Two Violins, Viola, Violoncello)

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Dedication

Short Stories bears the inscription, “For Kevin.” The work is dedicated to Dr.

Kevin M. Gerald, Associate Director of Bands and Director of Orchestral Activities at

the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. When asked to comment on the dedication, Puckett stated, “I’m not sure there’s anyone that gets my music better than Kevin – he’s done a lot of it. I’ve known him since 2000 and have always found him to be a kindred musical spirit.”¹⁴ Puckett further acknowledged his debt of gratitude to Drs. John Locke and Kevin Geraldini throughout the compositional process and premiere of *Short Stories*.¹⁵

When asked about his feelings regarding the dedication, Kevin Geraldini remarks,

It was quite an honor. For the composer to dedicate the piece to the person helping bring about the creation of the piece is incredibly meaningful. In like manner, every time I conduct a piece, of any composer, at least some aspect of that performance is dedicated back to the composer. I want it to be the appropriate acknowledgement of what that composer intended, with all the attention to detail and the concept for which the composer is going. The feeling is certainly mutual; I just can’t put it at the top of the score.¹⁶

Premiere Performance

Written for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Wind Ensemble, Dr. Kevin M. Geraldini, conductor, *Short Stories* received its premiere performance on Friday, March 22 at the 2013 College Band Directors National Association National Convention held in Greensboro, North Carolina. The soloists are members of the McIver Quartet, a resident ensemble of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where each member serves on the music faculty. The McIver Quartet consists of: Marjorie Bagley, violin; Fabian Lopez, violin; Scott Rawls, viola; and Alexander Ezerman, cello.

¹⁴ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kevin Geraldini, interview by author, Greensboro, May 29, 2014.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

Short Stories consists of eight movements. These movements appear to be organized into three distinct parts: Part I, movements 1 through 3; Part II, movements 4 and 5; and Part III, movements 6 through 8. Based on the program note, conversations with Puckett, and an analysis of the score, the overall structure of *Short Stories* emerges and is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Overall Structure.

Part I	Movement 1: Somewhere near the end	Initial Key Area: D Major	Frame
	Movement 2: Introit		
	Movement 3: The Priests		
Part II	Movement 4: Recitative	Key Area: Eb Major	
	Movement 5: mother and child		
Part III	Movement 6: sonno agitato		
	Movement 7: The Bridge		
	Movement 8: Ma Fin	Final Key Area: E Major	Frame

Using the idea of pairs, Joel Puckett has written a musical collection that takes his listeners on a journey. Throughout the journey, the listeners are introduced to a number of musical characters and textures, each combining to create the unique makeup of *Short*

Stories. The detailed artistry of *Short Stories* exhibits the composer's constructive devices, thematic development, and creates a sense of dramatic impact, which all allow the listener to create an aural image and connect to the overall musical story.

Further expanding on the idea of pairs, Puckett combines the eight movements of *Short Stories* into four sets of material and ideas that are, at a glance or first hearing, seemingly disparate. Further study reveals the intricacy of each pair and its contribution to the overall construct of *Short Stories*. The function of each pair varies and serves an independent purpose within the composition, but cannot be extracted as stand alone movements.

The use of smaller, measureable increments of pairs allows Puckett to create a sense of intimacy with each pair. As inspiration, Puckett used the vivid image of people telling stories around a campfire.¹⁷ As with sitting around a campfire, each pair in *Short Stories* has its own musical storyline and content, but the listener always returns to the conversation around an ambient campfire.

Short Stories itself is a unique pairing of forces, as Puckett combines a string quartet with wind ensemble. In this regard, *Short Stories* is one of three pieces in the wind band repertoire composed for such a combination. The other two pieces are *Concerto for String Quartet, Wind Instruments, and Percussion* (1976) by Walter Piston and *Concerto for String Quartet and Wind Orchestra* (1930) by Ervin Schulhoff.

Within *Short Stories*, the eight movements are paired: Movements 1 and 8, Movements 2 and 3, Movements 4 and 5, and Movements 6 and 7. Movements 1 and 8

¹⁷ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

serve as the framework for the collection of musical stories. Movement 1, the introduction and prelude, announces the unfolding of the composition whereas Movement 8, the conclusion and postlude, synthesizes the stories within the composition, bringing the piece to its close. The first two pairs of inner movements, 2 and 3, 4 and 5, feature members of the string quartet in pairs, viola/violoncello and the two violins, respectively. Movement 6 recalls music from movement 1, but is paired with movement 7 and therefore not a part of the framework.

Pair I – Movements 1 and 8

First and foremost, movements 1 and 8 serve as a frame in the overall construct of *Short Stories*. Puckett describes his framework in literary terminology, “a frame story is a device in which you have a narrative running throughout. Inside those frames are unrelated stories or chapters in a different time and place, which transports the reader between one place and another constantly.”¹⁸ Puckett cites his inspiration from the genius of author Chuck Palahniuk in his books *Haunted* and *Fight Club*, “the structure is so tight and consistent – and it’s brilliant. Palahniuk starts with an idea of form and you can always see this in his work. From there, he just expands off of it.”¹⁹

Movement 1

Movement 1 begins with an ascending gesture in the string quartet that signals a introductory gesture full of energy, worthy of Puckett’s “Kicking Ass”²⁰ description. The dominant to tonic motion in the first two measures establishes the key area of D Major.

¹⁸ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 1.

Immediately following, the trumpets and horns introduce the opening theme in octaves as seen in Figure 3. The theme serves a dual purpose as the opening theme of the work and foreshadowing future motivic material, particularly the minor third interval.

Figure 3. Opening Theme, measures 3-7.



The recurrence of measure 1 in its exact form serves as a second introduction for the instantaneous modulation occurring in measure 9, to the key area of G minor. The tumultuous nature of an abrupt shift to G minor changes the entire character of the movement. Throughout this section of unrest emerges the solo violin, which introduces a gesture later expanded in the fifth movement. In addition, the string quartet and wind ensemble slowly begin to overlap until the two are working simultaneously. Until measure 19, the two entities function independently. In measure 23, the bass line begins a sequence of perfect fourths, which is interrupted in measure 25 by the appearance of a B natural as seen Figure 4.

Figure 4. Measures 23-25.



The interruption of B natural serves as the basis for establishing the B minor harmony, which concludes the first movement. The shift serves as a pathway for allowing B minor to function as a dominant. Figure 5 illustrates the B minor conclusion of the first

movement and the resolution to a new tonic, E Major, with an E Major⁷ chord on the downbeat of movement 2.

Figure 5. Reduction of measures 26-29.



Movement 8

Entitled “Ma Fin,” Puckett takes his inspiration from Guillaume de Machaut’s *Ma Fin Est Mon Commencement*, “My end is my beginning.” In Machaut’s work, as the title suggests, the piece ends as it begins. So too in Puckett’s work, the beginning of the final movement is just as the beginning of *Short Stories* – measure 1 verbatim. In measure 427, the opening theme returns in an altered state from movement 1, and references the “Kyrie” from movement 2 shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Measures 426-431.



Puckett assures his listeners a varied hearing of movement 8 from that of movement 1. Measure 437 reveals the first instance of variation. Measure 437 interrupts and echoes repeating measure 436 exactly. Measures 442-443 are an extension of measures 440-441, where material from movement 5 is reviewed. In this presentation, however, the viola and cello are included as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Measures 440-443.

The musical score for measures 440-443 consists of four staves: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The notation includes various dynamics and articulation marks. Vn. 1 and Vn. 2 start with *ff* and transition to *f* by measure 442. Vn. 1 has a *mp* marking in measure 442. Va. and Vc. start with *sfz* and transition to *f* by measure 442. The score includes many accents, slurs, and other musical notations typical of a symphonic score.

In measure 453, the thirty-second note gestures resurface, creating synergy. The journey takes the listener through an eleven-measure transition to arrive in measure 464 in the new key area of E Major. After completing six measures in the new key, Puckett utilizes an extension, which serves a two-fold purpose: to allow the ensemble to fade away gradually and to introduce a final moment of repose in measure 473. Figure 8 illustrates the *subito piano* incorporated with an E Major chord and highlights from the harp, celesta, and guitars present a moment of instant calm from the previous forward-driving measures.

Figure 8. Measures 473-477.

The musical score for measures 473-477 is presented for the following instruments: Gtr., Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., Vc., Pno./Cel., and Hp. The score is written in 3/4 time. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows a descending gesture in the string quartet (Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., Vc.) followed by a building gesture. The Gtr. part is marked with a light stick and a2. The Pno./Cel. part is marked with a piano (p) and a forte (f) dynamic. The Hp. part is marked with a piano (p) and a forte (f) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Just as the opening began the journey with an ascending gesture, the closing section begins, appropriately, with a descending gesture in the string quartet. The gesture is immediately followed by the same building gesture found in movement 3, measures 201-202, a final reference to the “Kyrrie.” The piece closes with a B dominant seventh suspended second chord resolving to E Major, once again utilizing the powerful dominant to tonic motion. Arguably the strongest progression in Western harmony, the dominant to tonic motion gives the piece a sense of finality and appropriately suggests, “The End.”

Pair II – Movements 2 and 3

Movement 2

The beginning of movement 2 (*attacca*), serves as the final cadence of movement 1 and the new key area of E Major. In movement 2, Puckett creates a feeling of repose – space to process the ferocious activity of the first movement. Entitled “Introit,”²¹ the movement refers to the Proper of the Roman Catholic Mass in which liturgical texts change according to season. In addition, the use of the Proper foreshadows the Marian antiphon, which appears in movement 3. Puckett’s direction for the second movement, “like an ever continuing processional,”²² comes to life as he creates a feeling of forward motion through use of the ascending minor third interval in the violin to layer and build, shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Measures 31-35.



During the eighth and ninth centuries, the introit became shortened from its original form and served as a “musical prelude to the service, rather than a processional chant.”²³ In keeping with this idea, Puckett uses his introit as an introduction to movement 3. In measure 37, the alto saxophone introduces the *Kyrie*²⁴ from the Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Mass, in which liturgical texts remain constant from week to week.

²¹ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 10.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Richard Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 123-124.

²⁴ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 10.

As illustrated in Figure 10, the flute and clarinet continue the *Kyrie* and pass it to the cello in measure 44.

Figure 10-1. *Kyrie* Excerpt and Transcription.



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Figure 10-2. *Kyrie*, measures 37-43.



The contour of the *Kyrie* reveals the same descending, step-wise motion as the opening theme of *Short Stories*. The *Kyrie* is then continued in the cello, as the gesture is repeated a minor seventh above the original statement, shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Measures 44-47.



When asked to elaborate on references to the mass, Puckett states,

The mass is, at its heart, a ritual. One of the rituals is a procession down the center aisle. I was the cantor at a church in Detroit all through graduate school and I'd never seen anything like this kind of thinking and ritual – I was really attracted to it. I like to imagine if there were a center aisle that never ended and it was all about the music and getting the incense into the air and living in that space. That's what this is really about – getting that hypnotic, meditative zone-

out in that kind of service, where you get a calm euphoria. You get the *Kyrie* breaking through the hypnotic trance and then you're back to the euphoric state.²⁵

In measure 51, the two ideas, *Kyrie* and the ascending motive in the strings, combine to create the pinnacle of the movement at the end of measure 52. Puckett establishes the pinnacle by using the same pitches of the *Kyrie* (E, F#, G#, A, B), with a slight substitution: A sharp for A natural, and the addition of C sharp as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Scalar Ascent, measures 51-52.



The subsequent four measures bring the movement to its concluding cadence in E Major.

Movement 3

In keeping with his intent for *Short Stories* to have the feel of “a very old story,”²⁶ Puckett utilizes the brass and saxophone sections as two groups of instrumental consorts, a common, European practice. The solo cello emerges from the saxophone consort with the Marian Antiphon, *Regina Caeli*, or “Queen of Heaven”.

Movement 3 opens with a pair of antecedent phrases for which there is no consequent; measures 57-60 and 76-79, respectively. Interspersed between the first and second antecedent phrases is the cello solo; and, immediately following the second

²⁵ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

²⁶ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

antecedent phrase, the viola solo emerges, also proclaiming the Marian antiphon. The two soloists, as a consort, continue with interplay and variation on *Regina Caeli* until the return of the saxophone consort in measure 123. Figure 13 illustrates “little hints of the cello solo, and it says ‘*Regina Caeli*’”²⁷ throughout the movement.

Figure 13. Hints of *Regina Caeli* in Movement 3.

Measure(s)	Instrument(s)
124-129	Saxophones
129-133, 170-174	Viola, Cello
187-190	Trumpet 3 & 4, Horns

Making his mark at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in the Middle Ages, Léonin incorporated polyphonic music for soloists within the mass. The alternation of soloists (*organum duplum*) and chorus (plainchant) in the mass laid the foundation for motets and more complex musical styles.²⁸ Noticeably, Puckett creates his own version of this alternation, utilizing the cello and viola soloists for ornate and melismatic material (*organum duplum*) and the ensemble as the chorus (plainchant). In further keeping with the idea of the mass and church music, Puckett utilizes various church modes, such as Ionian, Lydian, and Dorian.

Puckett’s training as a vocalist supports the song-like quality found in *Short Stories*, and movement 3 fully embodies this characteristic. Puckett recalls, “once it gets going, you can actually sing along to *Regina Caeli*. That’s what this movement is really about, the cello and viola being part of the ritual that began in movement 2; and, the specific talk of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Barbara Russano Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music*, 56-58.

this day is about Mary, Queen of Heaven.”²⁹ Figures 14-16 illustrate the comparison of *Regina Caeli* and Puckett’s adaptation of the source material.

Figure 14-1. *Regina Caeli* Excerpt and Transcription.



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Figure 14-2. Measures 124-129.



Figure 15-1. *Regina Caeli* Excerpt and Transcription.



Figure 15-2. Measures 146-148.

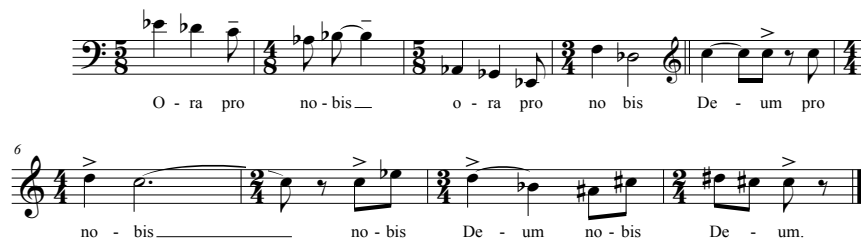


²⁹ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

Figure 16-1. *Regina Caeli* Excerpt and Transcription.



Figure 16-2. Measures 175-178 and measures 182-186. The latter measures follow the double bar.



Beginning in measure 186, Puckett notates “Bring it” in the score. Consequently, this occurs as the ensemble is performing Puckett’s rendition of the ornate “Alleluia” from the Marian antiphon.

In the “Alleluia,” enharmonic spellings signal a modulation (m. 185), which is confirmed by the presence of C-sharp minor in measure 193 (now functioning as a secondary dominant) and F-sharp minor in measure 200 (functioning as dominant). The “Kyrie” from movement 2 resurfaces, producing a perfect fourth sequence, with the first four pitches following the same intervallic scheme from its initial appearance (M2, P4, m2). Immediately following, in measure 203, the consequent of the opening antecedent phrases is achieved and the movement concludes on the bright, new tonic of B Major.

Pair III – Movements 4 and 5

Movement 4

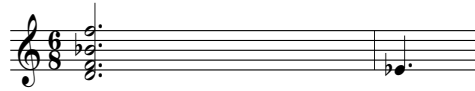
Movement 4 begins the third set of pairs comprising *Short Stories*. Entitled “Recitative,” movement 4 functions much like movement 2, as an interlude. Once again, Puckett creates a feeling of calm and space to process the previous movement. However this time, Puckett moves the listener from the exuberance and joy of the concluding “Alleluia” in movement 3 to a calm introduction of the following recitative and aria.

Oxford Music defines a recitative as “a type of vocal writing, normally for single voice, with the intent of mimicking dramatic speech in song.”³⁰ In this movement, the single voice is the 1st violin, later joined by the 2nd violin. Once again, Puckett reveals his vocal background through its incorporation into movement 4. To further support this claim, Puckett includes specific instructions in measure 212, “VERY FREE (A very old song).”³¹ As if to invite the listener to recall, Puckett again uses the interval of a minor third in measures 213-214. He leads the listener into a peaceful and intimate setting as he hovers in the key of E-flat Major. Metrically, the insertions of 6/8 time signatures throughout the movement interrupt the reminiscence in addition to foreshadowing movement 5. Movement 4 concludes, like previous movements, on a dominant harmony (in this case, B-flat Major). The beginning of movement 5 elides, serving as the dominant to tonic resolution ending movement 4; and, the beginning of movement 5 in the key area of E-flat Major, shown in Figure 17.

³⁰ Dale Monson, et al. “Recitative.” Oxford Music Online.

³¹ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 25.

Figure 17. Reduction of measures 248 and 250.



Movement 5

Movement 5 is an intimate look into Puckett's life. For a few brief moments, Puckett bears his soul to his audience. The title of this movement, "mother and child," could be understood as a continuation of the Roman Catholic imagery, eliciting an image of the Virgin Mary and Christ child. However, Puckett notes that this movement is a picture of his wife, Anne, and son, Emory, since Emory was born during the composition of *Short Stories*.

The interplay between the two violins in this movement emulates the intimacy and interaction between a mother and her child. Movement 5 is subtitled, "Aria, Duet."³² A more thorough understanding of this movement may be found in a meaning of the word "aria." "'Aria' can also mean just melody or tune on the one hand, or on the other, a more general 'manner', 'way' or 'mode of proceeding' in a technical or stylistic sense."³³ The act of proceeding alludes to moving forward, and seemingly is what Puckett had in mind as he wrote the note, "Leaning forward."³⁴ The forward motion is propelled by the introductory broken-chord ostinato presented in wind ensemble.

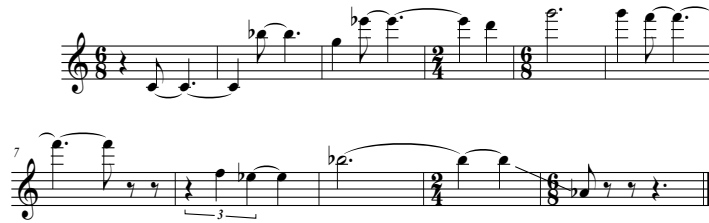
³² Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 28.

³³ Jack Westrup, et al. "Aria." Oxford Music Online.

³⁴ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 28.

The movement continues to progress with the song-like quality presented by the violins. Figure 18 shows the theme of the solo violin, which is presented following the brief two-measure introduction.

Figure 18. Measures 252-263.



Right away, the minor third interval is used, referencing previous movements. The violins alternate in a conversational format – one form of the many types of communication exhibited by a mother and newborn child.

In measure 279, the violin pair joins to create harmony on a unison rhythm, which was presented in movement 1. During this brief moment of harmony, there is an evident presence of the minor third interval. The minor third (C-Eb) is particularly highlighted in measure 281, the penultimate note of the gesture.

Further expanding upon the idea of pairs in this movement, Puckett uses the overall structure of the movement as another example of his pairing idea. No other single movement utilizes the structural pairing contained in movement 5, shown in Figure 19. Puckett pairs the A and B sections and the Interlude and Closing as two sets of pairs within the movement.

Figure 19. Formal Structure of Movement 5.

Formal Section	Measures
A	250-295, 320-349
B	296-307, 350-373
Interlude	308-319
Closing	374-377

Because the Puckett family would be incomplete without the mention of both Puckett children, Puckett includes his firstborn child, Avelynn, toward the conclusion of movement 5. In measures 368-373, Puckett quotes his 2011 work, *Avelynn's Lullaby* as illustrated in Figure 20.

Figure 20-1. Measures 368-373.

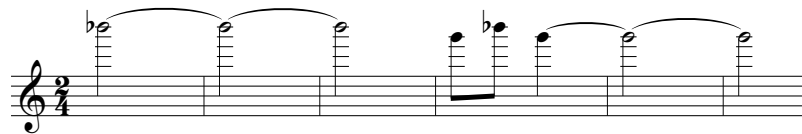


Figure 20-2. *Avelynn's Lullaby*, measures 3-7.



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Once again, as seen in both examples, the minor third appears in a prominent role of importance. Following the quote from *Avelynn's Lullaby*, the entire Puckett family is represented. The movement comes to a peaceful rest, concluding with dominant to tonic motion in E-flat Major.

Pair IV – Movements 6 and 7

Movement 6

Movement 6 returns the listener to original material from the first movement.

Puckett comments, “if you look at movement 6, it is the same music as movements 1 and 8 disguised. At the end, you sort of recognize it, but the whole movement you can find measure for measure in movement 1.”³⁵

The movement opens with an E-flat minor chord, and does not include the string quartet. The woodwind flourishes all emulate material originating in measure 2; and almost straightaway, the listener once again encounters the minor third interval in measures 384-385, shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Measures 384-385.



The presence of enharmonically spelled notes and the addition of more layers to the texture help create the mood of movement 6, appropriately entitled *sonno agitato*, literally, “restless sleep.”³⁶ The harmonic unrest and an accelerando beginning in measure 390 ushers in a very similar bass motion from movement 1, as seen in Figure 22.

³⁵ Joel Puckett, interview by author, Greensboro, May 27, 2014.

³⁶ Joel Puckett, *Short Stories*, (Baltimore: Joel Puckett Music, 2013), 46.

Figure 22-1. Measures 23-25.



Figure 22-2. Measures 394-396.



However, in the latter presentation, a tri-tone in the bass creates a sense of angst, as the ensemble prepares the way for the string quartet's cadenza.

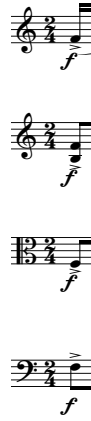
Movement 7

The re-entry of the string quartet in Movement 7, the cadenza, begins this movement of “greatest hits,”³⁷ as shown in Appendix A, in which the quartet is featured, joined by the occasional, individual, and highlighted moments from the ensemble.

Utilizing material from previous movements, the cadenza opens with a tri-tone, illustrated in Figure 23, as part of the initial statement, an interval of a third below the original statement in movement 1.

³⁷ Joel Puckett, diagram of *Short Stories*, See Appendix A.

Figure 23. Measure 398.



Measures 402-404 serve as transitional material. In addition, the viola and cello parts seem to incite a duel between the quartet's two pairs, shown in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Viola/Cello, measures 402-404.

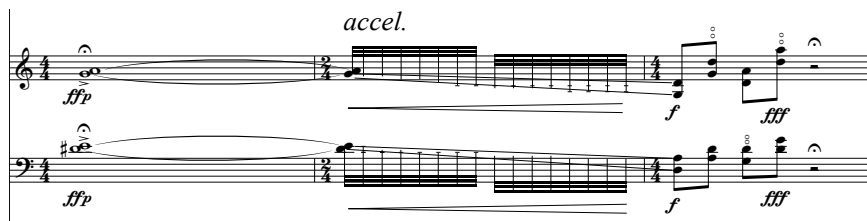


Figure 25 illustrates the continued duel as the two pairs alternate in duple versus triple opposition.

Figure 25. Measure 405.



The rhythmic synergy carries the movement to its conclusion, and serves as a vehicle for Puckett's return to the original key area of D Major in movement 8.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Joel Puckett continues to increase in significance as an influential composer of the twenty-first century. The brilliance of Puckett's constructive devices, thematic development, and sense of dramatic impact make *Short Stories* a powerful and moving composition. *Short Stories* is a primary example of Puckett's versatility in writing for the instrumental genre, including his use of unique instrumental combinations.

The use of string quartet and wind ensemble as a pair create a dynamic shared by only two other compositions for string quartet and wind ensemble. The unique combination enables Puckett to utilize the full forces of the wind ensemble; and when combined with the string quartet, create distinct timbres and textures. Puckett's contribution to the wind band repertoire is fresh and exciting.

On the surface, Puckett has the unique ability to create a pleasurable and meaningful aural experience for his audiences. Deeper exploration through listening and analysis reveal more subtle details. The pairs contained within *Short Stories* offer a systematic way of interpreting the work, in addition to discovering specific references, which illuminate particular life events of the composer.

The pairing of movements allows Puckett the opportunity to explore personal and intimate moments within *Short Stories*. The very idea of pairing the members of the string quartet together, in which each pair is featured prominently, speaks to Puckett's

exploration of intimate settings. From within the pairs, he references and highlights both personal experiences and life events. Through his music, Puckett bears his soul – a hallmark of personal intimacy. Various recurring gestures, ideas, and motives, give the listener a sense of familiarity with *Short Stories*, and invites Puckett's audiences to connect with his compositional style.

The research and analysis of *Short Stories* as a distinct contribution to the wind band repertoire is a worthwhile topic of research. This document addresses the background and compositional process of *Short Stories*, in addition to a detailed formal analysis. As one of few documents to address Puckett's music, the research presented here should serve as a catalyst for future conductors to explore and study more of Puckett's music. The lasting effects of *Short Stories* to the wind band repertoire remains to be seen; but initially, the impact appears to be positive and successful.

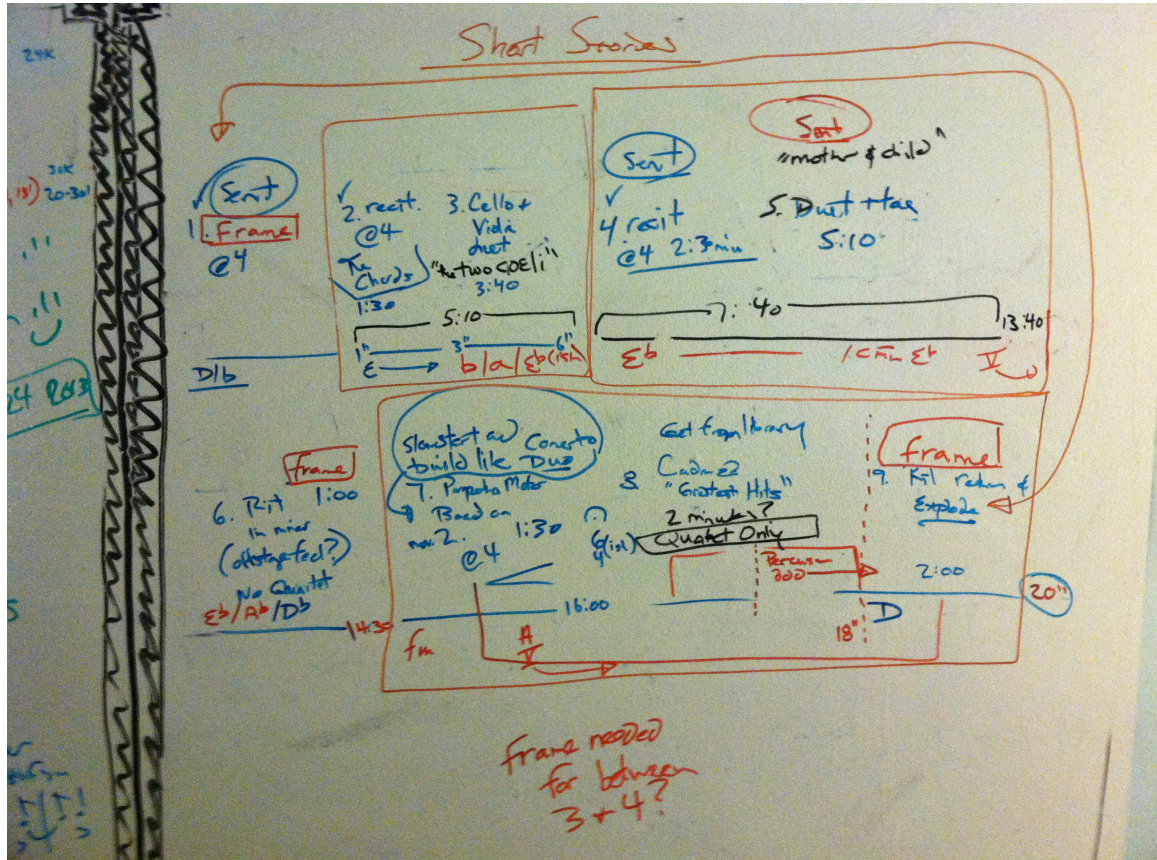
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APPENDIX A

IMAGE OF JOEL PUCKETT'S WHITE BOARD



APPENDIX B

ORIGINAL LITURGICAL SOURCE MATERIAL

1. x. c.

K Yri- e * e- lé- i-son. *ijj.* Chrí-

ste e- lé- i-son. *ijj.* Ký-ri- e e-

lé- i-son. *ijj.* Ký-ri- e * ** e- lé- i-son.

VI

R E-gína cæ-li * lætá- re, alle-lú-ia:

Qui- a quem me-ru- ísti por- tá- re,

alle- lú-ia: Resurré- xit, sic-ut di-xit, alle- lú-ia:

O- ra pro no-bis De- um, alle- *

** lú- ia.